

# Closing the Broadband Divide in Massachusetts

**Sharon E. Gillett**

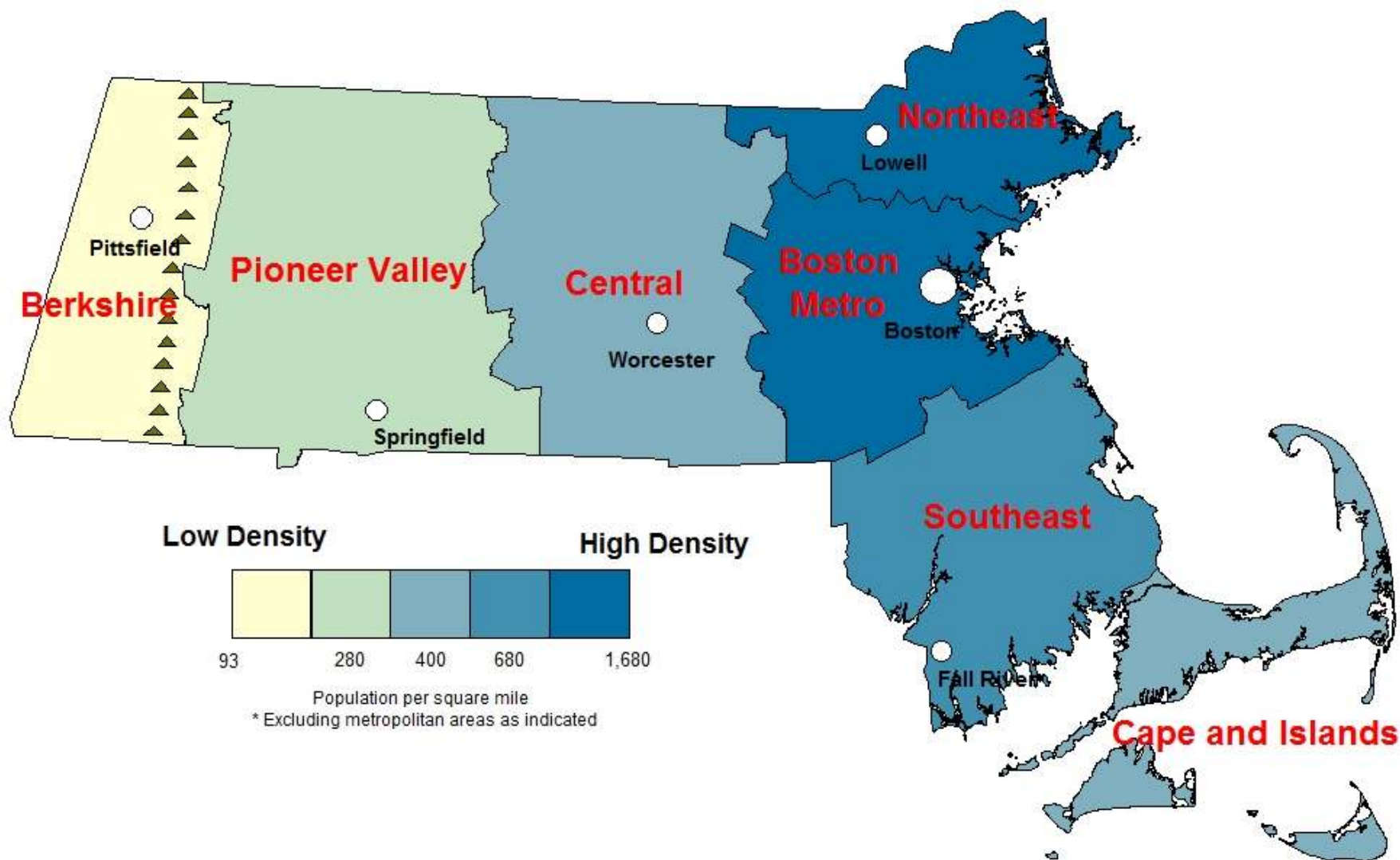
Commissioner , Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable  
Board Member (*ex officio*), Massachusetts Broadband Institute  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

*Broadband Summit: Connecting America*

FCC-NARUC Joint Conference on Advanced Services

Thursday, November 6, 2008

San Jose, California

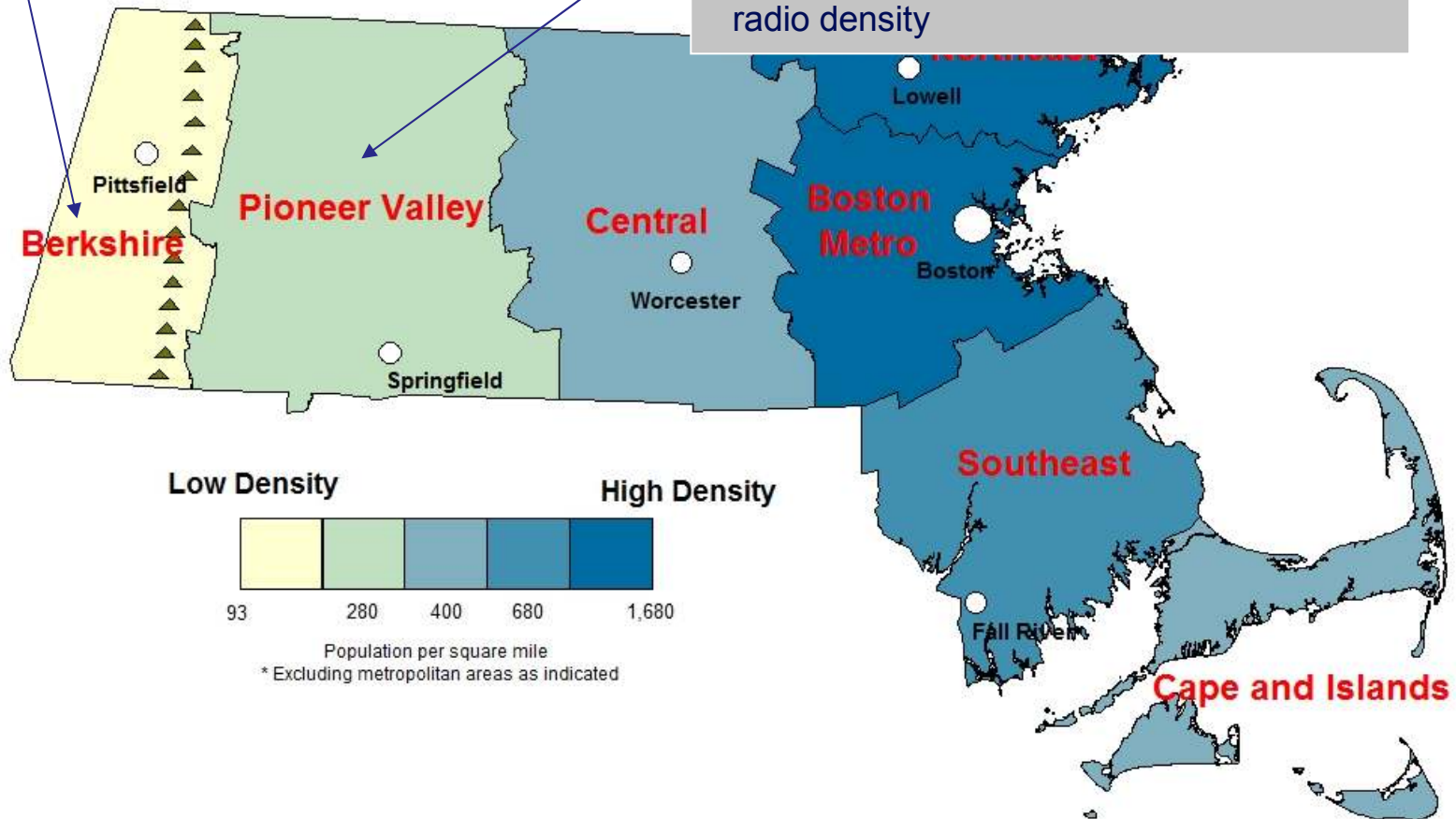


### **Berkshire Connect**

- Early (1997) demand aggregation effort focused on needs of business
- Attracted additional telecom provider
- By 1999, T-1 price from \$2000 to \$800

### **Pioneer Valley Connect**

- Recent (2007) pilot projects testing unlicensed wireless hot spots in 3 un-served towns: hills and trees
- A broadband lifeline for residents, once they understood setup
- Reality demanded twice the predicted radio density



### **Despite these efforts, significant residential broadband gaps remained by 2007**

- 32 towns in state (31 in western region) un-served by any wired broadband provider
- 63 more towns with only partial broadband coverage

## ***An Act Establishing and Funding the Massachusetts Broadband Institute***

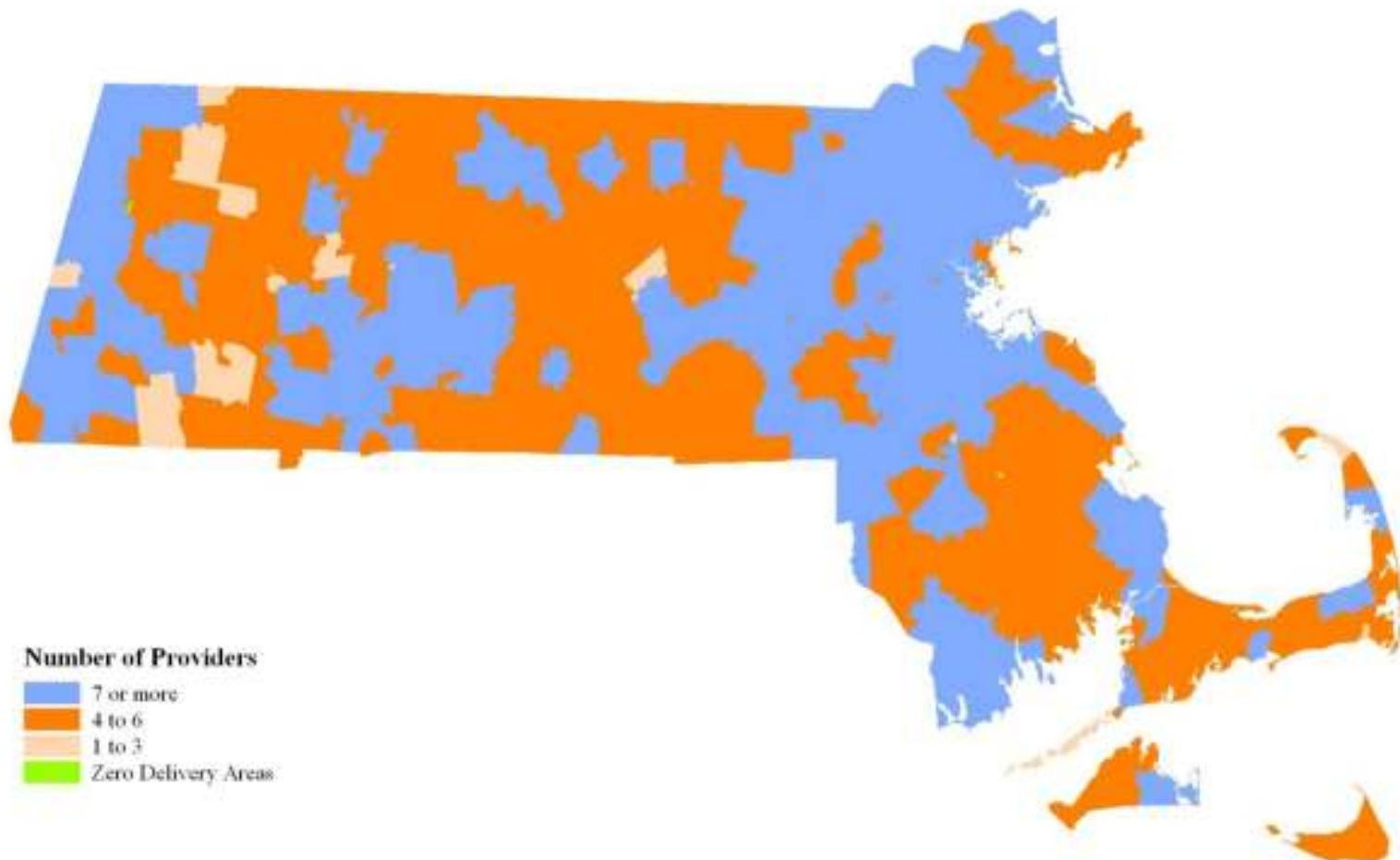
- Chapter 231 of the Acts of 2008, signed August 4, 2008
  - MBI established as new division within Massachusetts Technology Collaborative: [www.masstech.org/broadband](http://www.masstech.org/broadband)
- Up to \$40 million bonding authorization to close broadband gaps
- Approach: public-private partnership with a co-investment model
  - Public bonds fund long-lived infrastructure (e.g. fiber or wireless towers)
  - Private partners fund complementary infrastructure and provide service
  - Private partners may leverage additional federal funds, e.g. RUS
- Level of funding assumes a regional approach
  - Greater economies of scale than town-at-a-time
- Provides for more detailed assessment of who is un-served
- Facilitates the use of existing state assets for broadband deployment to the public

# Progress and Process

- Established Board of Directors
  - First meeting held October 3, 2008
- Published “Call for Solutions”
  - Vehicle for dialogue with providers and communities, completes Dec. 2008
  - [http://www.masstech.org/broadband/CallforSolutions\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.masstech.org/broadband/CallforSolutions_FINAL.pdf)
- Refining assessment of broadband gaps
  - Mapping progress and challenges
- Developing Request for Proposal (RFP)
  - Based on maps and input from Call for Solutions process
  - Completes summer 2009
- Post RFP steps
  - Contract negotiation
  - Construction!!

## Mapping Challenges: 2006 FCC Form 477 Data

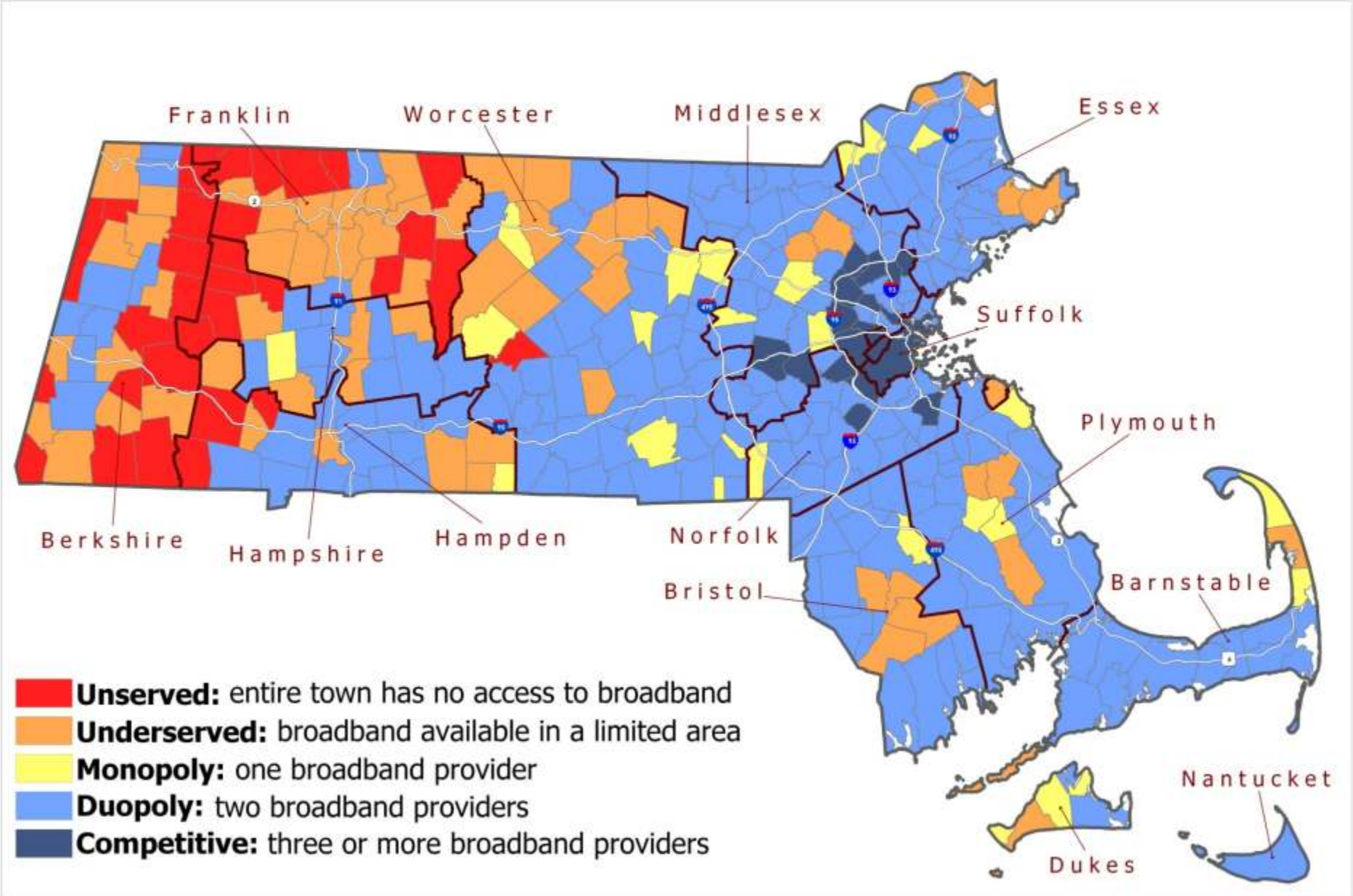
**High-Speed Providers by 5-Digit Geographical ZIP Code**  
(As of June 30, 2006)





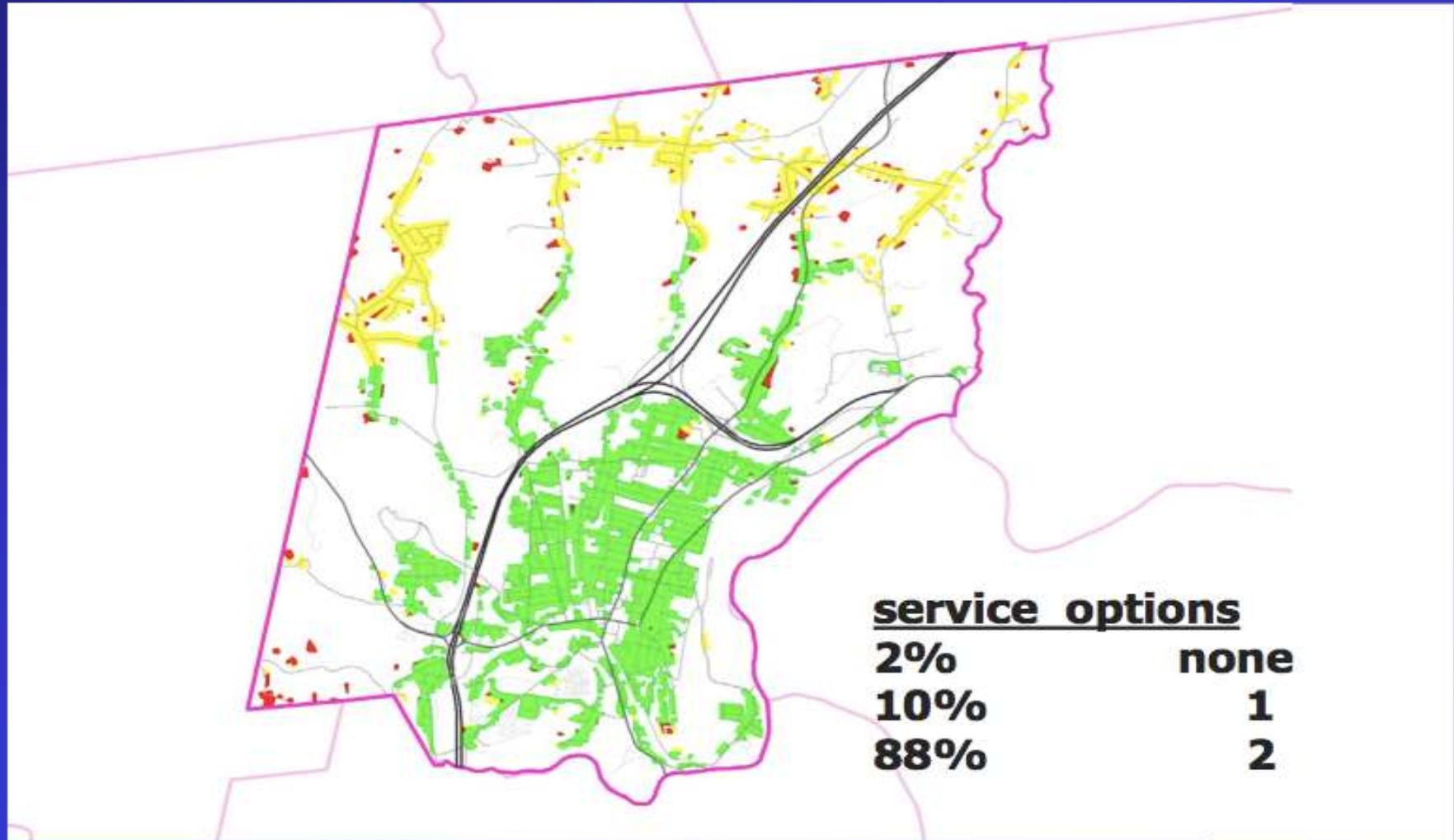
# Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Survey

## June 2007



## Sample GIS Future?

### Greenfield – monopoly, duopoly





[www.masstech.org/broadband](http://www.masstech.org/broadband)



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